10,000 km. of National Highways under NHDP Phase-III, accelerated road development in North-East Region under Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in North Eastern Region (SARDP-NE), upgradation of about 20,000 km. of single/intermediate lane National Highways to two lanes with paved shoulders under NHDP Phase-IV, six laning of around 5,000 km. (proposed to increase to 6,500 km.) through NHDP Phase-V, identification and construction of around 1,000 km. of Expressways under NHDP Phase-VI and construction of Bypasses, Flyovers, Road Over Bridges etc. under NHDP Phase-VII. The Government have already approved implementation of four laning of 4,000 km. of National Highways on Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis under NHDP Phase-IIIA and preparation of the detailed projects reports for the 6,000 km. under NHDP Phase IIIB. Nearly 1756 km. stretches of Uttar Pradesh are covered under NHDP Phase-I and II, 266 km. under NHDP Phase-IIIA and 351 km. under NHDP Phase-IIIB. The Government has recently approved implementation of Phase-A of SARDP-NE connecting 1,110 km. of National Highways and 200 kim. of State roads and roads of strategic importance and also given approval for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for roads in Phase-B consisting of improvements of 2,141 km. of National Highways and 2,981 km. of State roads and road of strategic importance.

As a matter of new policy, implementation of the various phases of National Highways Development Project, in future, will be mainly through Public Private Partnership.

Availability of Sim Cards in Jharkhand

†*334. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending for excel pre-paid Sim Card of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited in Jharkhand;

(b) by when the Sim Cards are likely to be made available to them; and

(c) by when the system of making excel pre-paid Sim Card available on demand would be brought in place?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) The number of applications pending for excel pre-paid connections of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in the State of Jharkhand are 1,25,852.

(b) and (c) In Jharkhand, BSNL has so far provided around 2,13,200 cellular mobile connections and is augmenting its network capacity by 2.5 Lakh lines during the current financial year. Accordingly, it will ease the availability of pre-paid cellular mobile connections in the State.

E-Auction of Coal

†*335. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

SHRI DATTA MEGHE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sale of coal through E-auction was introduced in the country;

(b) if sc, the date on which the said process for sale of coal was introduced;

(c) whether it is also a fact that certain people had objected to against the said process; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof and whether the Guwahati High Court has declared the said process as unconstitutional, if so, the process to be adopted by the Government for the sale of coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Subsequent to the directions of Hon'ble High court of Kolkata dated 13.5.2004 in Writ Petition No. 1199 of 2000, a transparent and objective marketing scheme was introduced on trial basis in the form of e-auction, in November, 2004 in Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) and was subsequently extended to all subsidiaries of CIL.

(c) Various consumers have objected to the e-auction initiative and have taken up the matter in various Courts.

(d) While hearing petitions filed by various non-core consumers/ traders against e-auction sale of coal by North Eastern Coalfields (NEC), the Hon'ble Guwahati High Court, on 8.4.2005, passed an Order to the

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.